



1st Annual OTA Symposium - VIRTUAL

VIRTUAL

Participate from anywhere you have a strong internet connection

RECORDING WILL BE AVAILABLE BY MARCH 1, 2024 FOR REGISTRANTS.

DATE AND TIME
February 24, 2024
9:00 AM to 2:15 PM

ADVANCE
REGISTRATION CLOSSES
February 23, 2024
5:00 PM

Register Online
<https://www.otaonline.org/education/specialty-symposiums/ota-symposium>

Register by Fax
916/294-0415

QUESTIONS?
Contact OTAC staff:
Email staff@otaonline.org
Call toll-free (888) 686-3225



Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024 – 9:00am to 2:15pm (earn 5 PDUs)

9:00am – 9:15am	Welcome and Introduction
9:15am – 10:45am	Creating an Intentional Professional Development Plan
10:45am – 11:45am	The OTA Workforce Study
11:45am – 12:00pm	Break
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Resistance Is Futile
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Building Bridges: A Journey of Occupational Therapy Assistants in Education and Leadership
2:00pm – 2:15pm	Wrap Up Questions

REGISTRATION FORM *One form per person. Please type or print clearly. Check appropriate boxes.*

OT/OTA MEMBERS	OT/OTA NONMEMBERS	STUDENT MEMBERS	STUDENT NONMEMBERS
<input type="checkbox"/> \$79	<input type="checkbox"/> \$109	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49	<input type="checkbox"/> \$79

TOTAL DUE: \$ _____ Please review the cancellation/refund policy below.
Advance registration closes Friday, February 23, 2024

Name _____

Employer _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Mobile _____

PAYMENT OPTIONS: CHECK ONE

Check (make payable to OTAC) MasterCard Visa AMEX

Credit Card Number _____

Exp Date _____ VCode _____

Cardholder Name _____

Cardholder Signature _____ Date _____

SUBMIT PAYMENT:

Fax to: 916/294-0415, or

REGISTER ONLINE - <https://www.otaonline.org/education/specialty-symposiums/ota-symposium>

Cancellation/Refund Policy. \$25 is retained to cover cancellation/refund processing costs. Written notice to staff@otaonline.org must be received in the OTAC office by February 20, 2024 to be eligible for refunds. No refunds after this date. Disclaimer: OTAC reserves the right to make changes to the program. No refunds will be made based on these changes.

OTAC is a nonprofit organization whose mission to be the collective voice representing the occupational

Schedule, Topic Descriptions, and About Our Presenters

Recording will be available by March 1, 2024 for registrants.

9:00am – 9:15am

Welcome and Introduction

Laura Deary, BS, COTA/L

Sherry Younesi, BS, COTA/L

9:15am – 10:45am

Creating an Intentional Professional Development Plan

Abi Swidergal, MS, COTA/L, CKTP, ROH, and

Melissa Tilton, MS, COTA/L, ROH

Occupational therapy practitioners are bound to practice acts, licensure requirements, and code of ethics to ensure we are providing effective intervention in creation of the best possible outcomes for each client and practice. To do so, we must engage in an intentional process for creating our professional development plans. Practitioners will identify methods for intentional planning of professional development.

10:45am – 11:45am

The OTA Workforce Study

Sharon Pavlovich, EdD, COTA/L

In collaboration with the California Board of Occupational Therapy, the California Community College Centers of Excellence conducted a 2019 California Occupational Therapy Assistant Workforce Survey for OTAs in California. This presentation will examine the report findings which combine original survey data with recent educational and employment statistics and projections to describe the current OTA workforce, the educational programs that train OTAs, and the growing employer demand for OTAs in California.

11:45am – 12:00pm

Break

12:00pm – 1:00pm

Resistance Is Futile

Rodney Harris, COTA/L

Rodney's journey from law enforcement to occupational therapy is a testament to the value of adaptability and recognition of the constant evolution of life. He will elaborate on how staying abreast of change enhances our ability to facilitate occupation-based interactions, ultimately contributing to improved outcomes for those we serve. He aims to inspire a mindset of adaptability and continuous learning, emphasizing the profound impact it can have on the field of occupational therapy.

1:00pm – 2:00pm

Building Bridges: A Journey of Occupational Therapy Assistants in Education and Leadership

Laura Deary, BS, COTA/L, and Jessica Padilla, COTA/L

The journey of two occupational therapy assistants whose history of volunteerism at the state and national organizational levels, coupled with their passion for the future of occupational therapy practitioners, has led them ultimately into the field of academia. The presenters will reflect on their journeys and expose the possibilities for other OTAs to follow in their footsteps.

2:00pm – 2:15pm

Wrap Up | Questions

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About Our Presenters



Laura Deary, BS, COTA/L, is currently an occupational therapy analyst at California State University, Dominguez Hills, in the Department of Occupational Therapy. After 10 years in corporate marketing, Deary discovered her second career as an occupational therapy assistant (OTA) and has spent the last 25 years working as a practitioner at

Cedars-Sinai, California Rehabilitation Institute and in home health. In her spare time, Deary has been involved in volunteerism on committees at the organizational, state, and national levels such as with OTAC, AOTA, NBCOT, and ACOTE. When asked about an OT career highlight, she doesn't hesitate to state that the highlight includes traveling to Ukraine as part of a rehabilitation team to teach Ukrainian colleagues regarding the rehabilitation process and the OT/OTA collaboration. When not working, Deary loves to travel and plan reunions - especially with other families who have adopted from Russia, where her daughter is from.



Rodney Harris, COTA/L, spent his formative years navigating the unique dynamics of a household where his father served as a California Highway Patrol officer and his mother worked as a school counselor. The expectations for good behavior were high, instilling in

Harris a strong sense of responsibility from an early age. While working in law enforcement, he continued to evolve personally and professionally, but his aspirations shifted. Seeking a more fulfilling path, Harris redirected his career towards occupational therapy. This pivotal decision marked the beginning of a transformative journey. Over the years, he has engaged in diverse professional settings, including pediatrics, skilled nursing facilities, long-term acute care, and more. Yet, it was in the realm of mental health that he discovered his true calling. Harris recognized that this field provided him with the opportunity to effect meaningful change and derive profound satisfaction from his work. Today, he is dedicated to making a positive impact in the realm of mental health, where he finds both purpose and

fulfillment. He is the 2023 recipient of the OTAC OT/OTA Partnership Award along with Ingrid Leu, OTD, OTR/L.



Jessica Padilla, BS, COTA/L, is an accomplished clinician and educator currently serving as an associate professor and academic fieldwork coordinator at Santa Ana College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. Padilla has gained experience in various settings, including pediatric hospitals,

outpatient pediatrics, home health, and skilled nursing facilities. Her dedication and contributions have earned her recognition, including the OTAC Vision Award, which acknowledges the impact of OT and OT collaboration during fieldwork at an emerging practice facility. Additionally, Padilla's positive influence on the community led to her being honored with the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce Difference Maker Award. Currently, she holds leadership and committee positions at the following institutions: Academic Senate Junior Senator at Santa Ana College, Student Leadership Committee Co-Chair of the Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC), Treasurer of the California OT Fieldwork Council (CAOTFC), and California Board of Occupational Therapy (CBOT) Education and Outreach Committee. As an OTA educator, Padilla is passionate about instilling growth and leadership in future occupational therapy assistants.



Sharon Pavlovich, EdD, COTA/L, is an assistant professor in the profession of occupational therapy; past president of the California Board of Occupational Therapy; and Harvard Macy Scholar. She is the author of the PSQ (Pavlovich Sexuality

Questionnaire) and has research and teaching interests in leadership, advocacy, DEI, and LGBTQA+ health and inclusive spaces.

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About This Virtual Symposium

This Symposium Will Be Recorded

Participate virtually on February 24, 2024, and then re-watch at your convenience for the life of the recording on OTAC's platform. Recordings are generally available 7 days following the conclusion of the event.

System Requirements. OTAC webinars are broadcast through Zoom. A broadband internet connection is required. For minimum system requirements, visit the following page:

Zoom - <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-Requirements-for-PC-Mac-and-Linux>

Symposium Disclaimer

This Symposium is sponsored by OTAC for the purpose of professional development. The material presented is not intended to represent the only or the best methods appropriate for the occupational therapy and/or medical condition or professional development issues being discussed, but rather is intended to present the opinions of the presenters, which may be helpful to other health care professionals at arriving at their own conclusions and consequent application. Attendees participating in this professional development education program do so with the full knowledge that they waive any claim they may have against OTAC and its representatives for reliance on any information presented during this educational event.

[Click here for OTAC's complete disclaimer/terms. You must agree to these disclaimers/terms. Please don't register if you do not.](#)

Professional Development Units (PDUs) | MyOTLicense

Earn up to 5 PDUs.

PDUs will be entered into your MyOTLicense cloud-based PDU tracking 'filing cabinet.' (Must be an OTAC member or MyOTLicense subscriber. This service is available only to OT/OTA licensees.)

To earn PDUs, registrants must complete the post event survey that is emailed out within one week following the event.



Abi Swidergal, MS, COTA/L, CKTP, ROH, is the founding program director at Black Hawk College in its new occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program. Her clinical expertise is in pediatrics, specifically hippotherapy. Her love of the profession, and especially advocating for occupational therapy assistants, has led to many volunteer positions, and pursuing the growth of her leadership skills. As a participant in the AOTA Emerging Leaders Program in 2016, her excitement for leadership within the profession expanded. Swidergal previously served on the Illinois Leadership Development Committee, and as the OTA Representative and ILOTA Awards Chair. Currently she is AOTA's Representative Assembly OTA-Representative, hoping to increase the national voice and engagement for all OTA members across the country. She was a participant in the AOTA Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for 2022-2023 and is currently pursuing her PhD.



Melissa Tilton, MS, COTA/L, ROH, has been an occupational therapy assistant (OTA) for over 25 years with experience as a multi-site director in skilled rehabilitation facilities, supporting rehabilitation in areas of practice, regulatory, advocacy, education, risk, and quality outcomes. Tilton now works as quality manager in accreditation at AOTA, focused on quality outcomes and risk management for OT/OTA programs who are Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) accredited and those working towards accreditation. Tilton has extensive experience in volunteering with various national and local committees focused on policy, regulatory, legislation and leadership. She presents nationally and locally with a strong interest in leadership, management, and quality outcomes.

Symposium Committee

Laura Deary, BS, COTA/L

Lisa Heistand, OTD, MS, OTR/L

Sherry Hite, MOT, OTR/L

Sharon Pavlovich, EdD, COTA/L

Sherry Younesi, BS, COTA/L



About MyOTLicense. MyOTLicense is a secure, cloud-based, easy-to-use virtual information and management tracking tool to help occupational therapy practitioners manage their professional information: licenses, certificates, memberships, professional development. You can think of MyOTLicense as your professional virtual electronic filing cabinet.



Why OTAC Symposia? To support OTAC Core Value 7 – Professional Development: To provide quality education and resources to advance the knowledge, skills, and continued competence of occupational therapy practitioners.

About OTAC. OTAC is a nonprofit, 501c6. This means that end-of-year net revenue is retained for operations and benefit of the members and is not distributed to private owners. It is governed by an elected, noncompensated Board of Directors and hires a professional association management team.

OTAC Mission Statement. OTAC is the collective voice that serves, promotes, and supports the profession of occupational therapy.

1st Annual OTA Symposium

UPCOMING VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIA

- February 3, 2024
7th Annual Oncology Symposium
Registration is open
 - March 12, 2024
1st Annual Student Conclave
 - April 13, 2024
3rd Annual Acute Care Symposium
 - May 18, 2024
6th Annual Mental Health Symposium
 - June 21, 2024
3rd Annual Academic Symposium
 - September 7, 2024
6th Annual School-Based OT Symposium
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